

## Grown from local roots

**M**any of us were introduced to STMA through a local chapter. Most likely, we heard about a workshop or meeting where fellow professionals were gathering to share, network and learn. These opportunities proved extremely valuable for technical knowledge and making business contacts.

Soon after discovering my local chapter, I realized how valuable the national structure of STMA could become for me. As a journeyman sports field manager, I could not believe there was a national association that offered what it did (and still does) in tangible benefits, and seemed to really care about me becoming successful in the profession. A ballpark on an off day can be a very lonely place, but I certainly learned that this wasn't a lonely profession!

As has happened with many others, I was asked to be a board member after attending about two chapter meetings. My memory recalls that offer quickly being followed by the request to have a chapter workshop at the facility I managed. Who can say "no" at that point, right?! There are more people than you think laughing right now because I'm not the only one who's bitten on the "you'd make a great board member" bait!

But I can honestly say it's the best thing that's happened to me professionally. Add the special friendships I've been privileged to make through STMA, and it ranks right up there on the personal scale as well. A simple, local introduction has changed and enriched my life more than it's comfortable to admit sometimes.

The STMA face that greets many in this industry is a local or chapter representative. Active chapters with aggressive offerings and great newsletters are critical to STMA's health. Engaged chapter leaders sell the STMA vision at the local level. In turn, STMA works to produce education for your newsletters, and our national chapter sponsors are helping to bring high-level educators and leaders to your local chapter events. We could not be a strong national association without the dedication of chapter volunteers. Thank you for all you do!

Regional summer workshops or institutes—an idea that STMA has tried in the past—is returning this summer. Five chapters are helping to develop the STMA Mid-Atlantic/Northeast Regional Sports Turf Management Workshop. It will take place June 27 in Philadelphia at Lincoln Financial Field and Citizens Bank Park. Top educators, tours, equipment demonstrations and a chapter competition will fill the day.

STMA plans to host more of these events within its chapter network in the future. Learning together and from each other really connects us as sports turf managers and that connection builds a strong foundation for the profession. STMA realizes that the national conference is not always affordable for multiple attendees from your facility. Thus, these regional conferences provide a high-end learning experience for great value for your entire crew. I hope many chapters are able to come together for a joint event of education and fun under the STMA regional umbrella!



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